THE IRON BRIGADE

A STORY OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

...By... GENERAL CHARLES KING.

CHAPTER X.

LIBBY OR LIBERTY.

Then came three days of rain, as rain it will—sheets and torrents—in the sweet springtide in old Virginia. And while McClellan's men were wallowing in the mud of the lower Peninsula, held by the elements, not by the enemy—for Magruder's little force at Yorktown could not have stopped two divisions when led by a later-day general of the Army of the Potomac—here about Charlottesville the wooded heights were draped in filmy mist, the mountain streams ran bank full, and Jack Chilton's bodyguard came on duty with blooming, rain-kissed cheeks, emerging from waterproof hoods and mantles that, like the antique coaches, coachmen and horses that brought them, were beginning to show many a pathetic sign of wear and tear. The arbor and the garden were, perforce, deserted, and Jack held court in the roomy old hall, while the doctor made his rounds heedless of weather or accounts alike unsettled. Scattered over a range of country within twenty-five miles radius of his office were the homesteads of some hundreds of families, not one of whom could later recall that "endurin' ob de wah" he ever presented a bill or neglected a case. And while he was ministering abroad it fell to Rosalie's lot to look after everything and everybody at home—invalided aunt, wounded brother, unbalanced domestics, already beginning to prate of life and luxury without work and freedom without knowledge, and last, yet not least, that now fast-mending prisoner in the second-floor back room, where he was becoming rude enough to prefer to stay, sit by the window and rock, and read the old masters beloved of the South—Scott, Sims and Cooper—and the speeches of the famous Virginian whose beautiful Monticello gleamed white among the grand old forest trees so close at hand, and whose broadly democratic theories, instilled in the immature minds of the student body, had well nigh wrecked at its very launching the dearest project of his declining years.

Rosalie, secretly disturbed about her captive, as the girls called him, professed to think Mr. Benton ought to be glad to come down stairs and watch Brother Jack being worshipped. "It ought to make any man better to see how Virginia girls honor a Virginia soldier stricken while battling for his native State." Bull Run victims were few and far between now—either were they dead or again on duty—and Virginia girls by the hundred were longing to lavish smiles and sweetness and soothing potions, all in one, on Virginia lads shot or sabered in their defense. Time was soon, and far too soon, to come when every house and every room should be filled with the sore-stricken, and there could be nowhere near enough girls to go around; but just now, in April, Charlottesville had but three wounded Southrons and one "Yank," and to the foremost of these Southrons all but a corps d'elite of Miss Chilton's choosing were denied admission. As to the Yank, no one of their number dare let another know how gladly would her charity have been extended—even to him. Of course, however, that was merely through curiosity.

No. Fred Benton was chafing, restless and unhappy, and, even now that Paul was gone, again suffering the pangs of jealousy. A tall Confederate officer, a very distinguished-looking major of the staff, had called thrice in two days, and had had long conversation with the little lady of the house—one, in fact, behind closed doors, after Jack had been "toted" to his room. Fred heard the colored house of commons discussing the pros and cons as to that indication, and in like manner ascertained that the officer was Major Lounsberry—long a resident of Albemarle and now of the staff—the inspector's department of the Confederate army, and Fred could have sworn his pretty jailor was in tears when she came hurrying up from one interview, for he went out in hopes of a word with her, but she saw or suspected and darted to her room without heeding his hail. Morning and evening both had he watched for the return of the lady of the broad-brimmed felt, but the rain or something had been too much for her, and she failed to appear. Major Lounsberry's deep voice, however, was heard in the broad lower hall three hours after his long afternoon interview with Miss Chilton, and the doctor came briskly forth from his study to greet and welcome the distinguished representative of the war office—the son of an old familiar friend. There was good news from Yorktown, it seems, and small Pomp brought it in with a little pitcher of cool buttermilk and some "cohn pone" for Marse Benton—"De Yankees done got licked agin down by Yorktown." "Marse Lounsberry" had so told the doctor, and Fred went down to Jack's room, his arm still slung, to wish him good-night and learn what he knew, and Rosalie departed and left them to each other, and it happened that as the doctor was ushering his martial visitor from his study to the door, full fifteen minutes later, and long before Benton's usual hour for retiring, the door to Jack's room opened and the Yankee lieutenant came forth, looking very tall, erect and by no means broken down.

The doctor gave a start—an unmistakable glance of warning. A crouching bundle of femininity near the head of the stairs, out of Lounsberry's sight but plainly in Benton's view, frantically signaled with both impetuous hands—with wild eyes and wide-opening mouth gasping dismay—the imperious order to go back at once, but obtusely Benton stood his ground and faced, half defiantly, this new visitor, who, in turn, stopped short and calmly, even somewhat insolently, surveyed him. The major was the first to speak.

"Lieutenant Benton, I presume," said he, "and looking vastly better than I had been led to—hope." How near he there came to saying "believe."

"Looking quite well, my dear major," hastily interposed the doctor, "yet, I assure you, but the ghost of the fine young fellow who rescued me that night at Centerville. It will be months before he can handle a saber again."

"How about a pen?" asked Lounsberry, significantly, his eyes burning into Benton's gaze as though striving to read his innermost thoughts.

"Mr. Benton has certainly managed to write three home letters—left-handed," answered Dr. Chilton, speaking for his captive guest, yet glancing nervously toward him. "They were duly forwarded to Richmond to be censored. Was it there you saw them, Major Lounsberry?"

"I had reference to possibilities, doctor, though I am not unacquainted with the lieutenant's left hand-writing. It would be injudicious, for instance, not to say ungrateful to those who have shielded him, were he to answer the letter he found at the old side gate of the garden Monday evening."

The hot blood leaped to Benton's face. Lounsberry had spoken with the cool deliberation of one absolutely sure of his ground. The doctor turned and stood gazing at his guest as though expecting him promptly to deny the imputation. From the stairway came the sound of faint rustle, as though Rosalie shrank still further away, and Benton felt, rather than saw—for under the major's stern, relentless, searching gaze he dare not look in the lead of his heart—that her eyes were fixed upon him in mingled scrutiny and indignation. The silence was painful, and Benton broke it.

"There was nothing new in the note, doctor," said he, purposely ignoring the staff officer. "It was to tell me—what I already suspected, and, since this gentleman's arrival, have felt sure of—that I was to be sent to Richmond. Do not let it worry you. I have been preparing for it, and now I am quite ready to go."

For the life of him, as the sentence closed, he could not avoid shooting one swift glance at the stairway to note the effect of his words. The major saw, turned and, finding that from where he stood the landing and stairway were hidden from view, stepped quickly forward. Benton instantly did the same, and, almost breast to breast, they met there in the middle of the room—the blue and the gray—the fire flashing in the eyes of each. There was the sound of whisking drapery, a soft swish along stair and balcony rail, and in an instant Rosalie had darted to the landing and out of sight. A half smile, contemptuous and cutting, played about the Confederate's lips. He gave no sign whatever that he had heard. He addressed himself to Benton:

"I presume you have burned that note, sir, and, therefore, have nothing with which to back your statement, but I take you at your word. You are ready to go, you say; be ready to start, then, at 6 in the morning."

"My dear major!" broke in Dr. Chilton. "Surely you——"

"Those are my orders, doctor. I have no volition," answered Lounsberry, coldly. "And now, if I may say adieu to Jack I'll leave you to such preparation as may be necessary. The guard will call for Mr. Benton at 6. I go myself to Gordonsville to-night."

With that Major Lounsberry turned haughtily—there is no other word for it—away, as though the possibility of further talk with a Federal prisoner was something intolerable to an officer of his rank and station. The doctor, stunned and silent, looked helplessly from one to the other, and again it was Benton who spoke a reassuring word. Cordially he held forth his one free hand.

"It's all right, doctor," said he. "You and Miss Chilton have pulled me round famously. I can stand Libby diet now just as well as anybody, and I'm betting on speedy exchange. Then—our fellows will be doing something now," he added, with significant smile. "Who knows but they may gather in game as big as that?" with a laughing nod toward the resplendent major. "Or is he, like so many of our staff, only for duty at the rear?" And Benton meant that Lounsberry should hear, and hear he did and flushed red under the taunt.

"Do not judge our methods by the little you know of yours, Mr. Benton," he retorted, albeit with admirable self-control. Then, as though again determined to ignore the Northerner, "May I be permitted a word with Lieutenant Chilton, doctor?" a question which seemed to recall the doctor to himself and left Benton to his own devices. Without another glance at the unwelcome visitor the latter turned and ascended the stairs to the second story, and there, in the dim light of a night lamp, by the eastward window, stood the girl he longed to see and speak with, and she who had avoided now came half timidly forward, as though to meet him.

The broad hallway of the lower story, extending from the colonnaded portico in front to the wide veranda in rear, was virtually repeated aloft by as broad a "landing," from which opened four bedrooms in the main building and passageways leading to the wings. India matting covered the floor. Couches, divans and easy reclining chairs were scattered about. Several portraits in oil of famous connections of the family—Cabell, Custis or Stuart—and many a good engraving hung about the walls. Two windows, heavily curtained, opened to the east; two others, draped in dimity, looked out over the fine old-fashioned garden, over a few Virginia homesteads peeping from the midst of oaks and maples, with the roofs and cupola of the university in the distance, and beyond them the tumbling outline of the Ragged mountains, rising against the backbone barrier to the great valley, the beautiful Blue Ridge. It was away from the neighborhood of her aunt's door and her own and close to the westward windows that Rosalie Chilton silently led her captive soldier, and then turned, her face pale and sorrow-stricken, her great dark eyes filling with unshed tears. For days she had been distant, repellent almost, in manner that relented not one whit, even when she saw it stung and grieved him. To-night she seemed suddenly to have determined on making amends. Without, the skies had been covered with heavily charged masses of clouds that poured their torrents on the thirsting earth, but now a vigorous young moon was peeping through the thinning veil and throwing a vague, ghostly light upon garden, village street and vine-clad arbor, and tracing marvelous pattern of fretwork on the India matting. Within, just in like manner, Rosalie's almost perfect face had been darkened by clouds Fred could neither banish nor fathom, but now a new, soft, tender light seemed shimmering through. What could it mean? he asked, with beating heart, for there was a moment in which neither spoke.

"I have a confession to make, Mr. Benton," said she, at length. "Do you think—it's easy for a girl to say—she's glad to find that she was wrong?"

"Something has seemed to me very wrong of late," answered Benton, "so much so I was glad to get away on any terms, even to Libby. For what have I been punished?"

"I shall tell you—frankly," she answered, standing with downcast eyes before him, her white hands loosely clasping. "Do you know, I thought—I heard—that you were plotting with people outside to escape, and, father being responsible for you, it seemed ungrateful—indeed dishonorable——"

"But what on earth have I said or done to warrant the belief? I have talked with no one, communicated with no one, except that, after I had noted your cold and distant manner, there came this little unsigned note, saying that I was to be sent to Richmond. I have never answered it. I haven't an idea who sent it."

"But the note——" and now she looked up eagerly, "you have it—still?"

"Burned it to ashes the hour it came!" he answered.

"But you saw who brought it—or who left it?"

"I saw——" he impulsively began, then stopped short. What right had he, a Union soldier, to give information against some possible Union lover in their midst, one who was seeking to be of service to him, at that?

"Oh, you needn't say!" cried Miss Chilton, with a curl of her lip. "We know—at least I know—the girl! What we heard, or at least I heard, a week ago was that you—that they, that—oh, I can't explain—I can't go on!" she said, and now burning blushes, to his amaze, suffused her face, and she covered it with her hands.

Then voices were heard below stairs—the doctor showing the major from Jack's room to the door, ceremonious and courtly even when aggrieved.

"He will wish to see me—perhaps you, too—at once," suddenly exclaimed Miss Chilton, starting impulsively forward. "I just want to know that—that what I now believe is true, and to be able to say so confidently to father, and, perhaps, to—to others. You had not thought of trying to escape so long as you were with us?" And for an instant the dark, glorious eyes looked full into his face, then fell before the intensity of his.

"On my word, Miss Chilton—no!"

"Then—then," she vehemently cried, "I don't care how soon you do try—now!" and with that she darted past him to her own room, and presently the doctor's slow step was heard ascending the stairs.

It was late that night and the moon had dipped beyond the Blue Ridge when, after a family talk in Jack's room, they separated. Not another chance had Benton to speak to Rosalie, but for good and sufficient reason he had found her actions of most unusual interest. Pale and silent, absorbed in thought, she had taken little part in the conference. Twice she stole softly to the window, drew aside the curtain and peered through to outer darkness; then, while her father was earnestly talking, she seated herself close to the curtains, and Benton, watching her with devouring eyes, saw that she was listening intently for sounds, signals, something from without, and paying little heed to what was said within. Then, he could not be mistaken, there came a low tap, tap on the pane. Rosalie quickly, silently drew the shade aside enough to enable her to give one answering tap, and a moment later she stole quietly out of the room while the doctor was still talking, and when she returned, nearly half an hour later, there were drops of water on her rippling hair.

By this time between the Chiltons, father and son, it had been determined that every influence should at once be brought to bear at Richmond to bring about Benton's exchange—Fred himself agreeing to write urgent letters to friends in front of Washington. Already quite a number of officers and men had been returned from Libby, the first small boatload having gone to the capital and been welcomed by the President himself before the winter's snows were swept entirely from the Viginia mountains. "Just one thing I fear," said the doctor, "that the same influence that dogged you here and led to the order for your delivery there may pursue you at Richmond."

"And will you tell me what that is and why it should be so bitter?" asked Benton.

The doctor glanced uncertainly at the thinned face, flushing faintly even through the pallor of this long confinement, then turned to Rosalie. Quickly she again left her chair, hurried to the window and threw open the curtain, as though to look forth into the night, where all was apparently dark as Erebus.

"It is a family—jah, suh. I hardly understand it myself. But I'm bound to say that Major Lounsberry has forfeited any claim he may have had upon my friendship. Now I must look to that bandage again before you retiah, suh." And thus closed the conference.

Not half an hour later young Pomp was nervously fidgeting about the room on the customary plea of helping Marse Benton undress, when he rolled his big eyes thrice to the west window and finally said, with a chuckle:

"Marse Jack never thought nuthin' of swingin' out of that window when dis was his room, 'fo' de wah."

"Rather a high jump for a heavy man," suggested Benton, wondering to what this conversation might lead.

"Lawd, Marse Benton, you done fo'got de lightnin' rawd!"

Stepping to the window, the lieutenant peered forth into the moist and windy night. The clouds were sailing swiftly overhead, alternately hiding and revealing the few peeping stars. A warm wet breeze was swaying the boughs of the big oak at the back of the garden and the branches of the locusts along the unpaved side street. Not a glimmer of light came from any of the scattered houses; not a sound was heard save the sweep and rustle of the gentle gale. A few heavy drops still pattered from the eaves and splashed upon the sill beside him—drops such as shone on Rosalie's wavy hair. Putting forth his hand, he could feel, just to the left of the window, the stout, thick iron rod that Pomp had described—Jack's means of egress in wild university days, not so long gone by.

Slowly, thoughtfully he closed the shade and returned to the dressing table where stood the single candle. Pomp had vanished, but there, pinned to the cushion, was the mate to the strange little billet he had found at the gate. Even the handwriting was the same:

"Horses, guide and everything you need waiting back of the barn. Lose not a moment! Choose between the mountains for a day or two, or Libby for the rest of the war. Burn this, too."

[To Be Continued To-Morrow.]

Had to Secure Affidavit.

John Morrison applied to George Fate, marriage license clerk in the county clerk's office, yesterday, for a license to marry Miss Jennie Cravens. He told Fate that as soon as he was married he would hunt "a job for the old woman." Fate would not issue the license until Mike Traugott, a barrel-house keeper, signed the affidavit for Morrison.

A GREAT SCHEME.

First Saloon Keeper—Doing a great business this fall.

Second Saloon Keeper—How do you manage it?

First Saloon Keeper—Give a quinine pill with every drink.

WORK ON TRACTION LINES

RAPID TRANSIT PROMOTERS PUSHING WORK VIGOROUSLY.

Cars Will Be Running Here from Lebanon by Next May—Progress with Other Lines.

Townson, Reed & Co., promoters of the Indianapolis, Lebanon & Franfort traction line, will commence work to-day at Zionsville, laying steel, working toward Lebanon, the grading between those points having been completed. The contractors have a large amount of equipment at Zionsville, including two steam locomotives and a large train of standard ballast cars. They expect to have the rails laid at Lebanon within the next two weeks. Meantime a large force of men will push the work of grading from Zionsville to North Indianapolis, a distance of about twelve miles.

They have also begun grading the right of way from Lebanon to Frankfort, sixteen miles, penetrating en route a large and exceedingly rich territory hitherto remote from either steam or electric lines. The intention is to extend the line from Frankfort to Lafayette, and the survey has developed the somewhat surprising fact that the right of way secured insures a shorter route between Indianapolis and Lafayette than that originally contemplated, which paralleled the Chicago division of the Big Four the entire distance.

The proposed line from Crawfordsville to Lebanon included in the same system, also opens up a new and rich territory heretofore denied rapid transit facilities. Lebanon is to be the junction point for the Lafayette-Frankfort line and the Crawfordsville line, extending thence to Indianapolis. From Lebanon to Zionsville, fourteen miles, the electric line parallels the Big Four. From Zionsville to North Indianapolis the route will follow closely the geography of the old Michigan road.

Townsend, Reed & Co., who constructed the Indianapolis and Shelbyville line, are vigorously pushing work on their northern lines. The large central power house at Lebanon is already well under way, and they expect to have cars running between the city and that place by next May.

W. J. BRYAN'S LETTER.

(CONCLUDED FROM FIRST PAGE.)

he thinks, but it is his understanding that it will come only before the Senate in the shape of a treaty. He does not anticipate any tariff legislation. "The session will be too short for that," he said, "but I should not be surprised if a special session is called to consider the tariff question and also some trust legislation."

Representative Landis was asked about the question that is commanding considerable attention in this State at present—the adoption of voting machines. "I am in favor of voting machines," he replied with emphasis, "and I hope that the Legislature this winter will enact a law compelling the purchase and use of machines in every county in the State. Voting machines are no longer an experiment; they have been used successfully in other States and should be adopted in Indiana."

TALKS ON CURRENT TOPICS.

A. C. Harris and Primary Election Law—Favors Voting Machines.

Addison C. Harris, chairman of the Commercial Club committee on a primary election law, said yesterday that nothing had been done as yet in the way of drafting a bill to be submitted to the Legislature this winter.

"I was exceedingly busy during the campaign," said Mr. Harris, "and since the election I have been engaged in a number of lawsuits. Consequently I have not found time to call the committee together to work on the primary question. However, during the campaign I took some pains to find out the sentiment of the people in the places I visited in regard to the primary law, and I found that there is a general sentiment in favor of a law that will embody many of the features of the regular election law—that is, similar provisions regarding the qualifications of the voter, the counting of the vote by a sworn board, with watchers, etc., and certified returns, and the punishment for the buying and selling of votes.

"I think no one in Indiana wants such a farce of a primary law as that which now prevails in Minnesota, where the primaries of both parties are held on the same day and at the same places, and the voter is taken into a booth and given a ticket with the candidates of both parties, to vote for whom he pleases. Under such a law it is possible for the Democrats to detail a certain number of their men to vote for the weakest Republican candidate, insuring his nomination, and vice versa. I think that no one but a Republican should be permitted to vote at a Republican primary, and that Republicans should have nothing to do with the selection of Democratic candidates.

"I believe that it will be impossible to secure the passage of a uniform primary law—one that requires every county and city to nominate by direct vote. In some counties the voters are wedded to the plan of nomination by convention, and while they will select their delegates by primary they will fight a law for direct nomination. The committee will take up the question in the near future and will endeavor to enlist the interest of some members of the Legislature to offer a bill embodying the ideas that represent the sentiment of the voters of the State."

Mr. Harris also spoke of the voting machines and registration law questions and he said that he had found considerable sentiment in favor of both. "I think the people of Indiana are ready for voting machines and I believe the coming Legislature will consider and pass a measure providing for their adoption. As to the registration law, I found that while the people in the larger towns and cities of the State favor it, the people of the country districts do not see the need of it. In the rural districts, where every voter in a precinct knows every other voter, there really is little need of a registration law, and naturally the representatives from these districts will oppose it, but in the large centers of population, such as Indianapolis and the other leading cities of the State, the need of a registration law is clearly seen. I have no idea as to what the Legislature will do with the question, however."

Mr. Harris was a member of the state Senate twenty-five years ago and was active in securing an amendment to the state Constitution making a registration law possible, but the question has never been settled by any of the succeeding legislatures.

KUHN KEPT UP THE JOKE.

He Issues a Statement that He Will Not Make a Contest.

The intimation published in the Journal that August M. Kuhn, the defeated Democratic candidate for treasurer of this county, was a joker and that in withholding his announcement as to whether he would contest the election he was merely trying to keep the Republicans on the anxious seat and have what little fun there was in the situation for him, was borne out by the statement which he issued yesterday in declaring that after mature deliberation he would not make a fight in the courts. He says in this statement that he knew before the election that he would be counted out if a plurality of the votes cast were for him, for he was warned to that effect by his Republican friends. Further, he says, the evidence upon which he might base a contest was either destroyed or made unavailable and consequently his attorneys had advised him that he would not be justified in starting a contest.

In some precincts, he says in the statement, a large number of ballots which were voted for him were not counted and were not protested, preserved or returned to the clerk, but were burned, and in this manner he lost more votes than the plurality of Ensley.

It would be difficult to convince the Republicans who were interested in the case that Mr. Kuhn never seriously contemplated a contest. They say that the extraordinarily fair treatment accorded the Democratic candidate during the canvassing of the vote and the results of the investigation of his attorneys into the number of protested ballots made a contest out of the question, for Mr. Kuhn would not begin the expensive proceedings without a reasonable hope of success. A recount of the vote by the court, they say, would make Ensley's plurality larger, if anything, and they were ready for a contest at any time.

The rumor that Mr. Kuhn is to become a candidate for the Democratic nomination for mayor is a persistent one, despite his denial that he will become a candidate, and it will gather strength from his statement in regard to the contest.

E. H. NEBEKER IN THE CITY.

Favors Adoption of Voting Machines—Retirement from Prison Board.

"I am in favor of the adoption of voting machines by the coming Legislature," said E. H. Nebeker, at the Denison last evening, "providing a machine can be found that is satisfactory in every respect and the people are not held up for an exorbitant price for it. I do not know that there is a machine that will be practicable for a national election, when the ticket is so large, but if there is we should adopt it. There was an attempt two years ago to secure the adoption of a machine, but I think that it was not wholly satisfactory, and the price did not look right to me. We want no jobbery, no matter how much we want the machine."

Alluding to his resignation from the board of control of the Prison North, Mr. Nebeker said that the attempt of certain newspapers to attach some ulterior political significance to his action was wholly without foundation. "I have been a member of the board some eight years now," he said, "and I have found that it is extremely wearing on me physically to meet the demands of the office. I had to make the trip to Michigan City at least once a month, and I am getting to an age where there is a limit to the amount of traveling I can do in a day and not tire myself out.

"The prison at Michigan City is in a splendid condition at present," continued Mr. Nebeker. "I doubt if there is a similar institution in the country that will excel it in discipline and the details of management. Mr. Reid is making a splendid record as warden and we had two excellent wardens before him—Harley and Shideler. I think the legislative committee will find conditions at Michigan City par excellence."

Politics Already Forgotten.

Judge John M. Morris, of New Castle, who was elected to the circuit bench of Henry county at the last election, said last night at the English that politics had been forgotten in his county by this time and that the people of New Castle are thinking of nothing but the commercial growth of their city. New Castle has taken rapid strides in the last two years in an industrial way, said Judge Morris.

Alluding to the election and the campaign claims of the Prohibitionists that they would cut a big figure when the votes were counted, Judge Morris said: "The Republican plurality this year was just as large as ever and the Prohibitionists cut no figure except by way of reducing my plurality about two hundred votes. They did not nominate a candidate for circuit judge, but instead fused with the Democrats on that office, and as a result I ran slightly behind the rest of the Republican ticket."

Phalanx Attacks Eli F. Ritter.

The State organ of the Prohibitionists, the Patriot Phalanx, in its current issue, under the head "An Enemy Exposed" charges Eli F. Ritter, of this city, with having sent a circular to Prohibitionist voters of the State during the late campaign, urging them to support Republican legislative candidates as the safest plan of preventing legislation favorable to the liquor interests. This action, says the Phalanx, was a part of the scheme of the Anti-saloon League to deceive the people into believing that there is danger of the coming Legislature enacting laws desired by the liquor interests. "It is painful to have to say these things of former friends and co-workers," says the Phalanx, "but duty demands it, and it is due the cause that we should let its enemies be known, no matter who they may be."

Chairman Goodrich Returns.

Chairman Goodrich has returned from the trip to New York which he says was a mission of a purely private business character. "I am trying to forget that there is such a thing as politics," he said at the English last evening.

Fassett A. Cotton, state superintendent-elect of public instruction, announced last week that he had left the question of bringing suit for criminal libel against the Democratic state committee with Chairman Goodrich for decision. Mr. Goodrich said last night that he had not considered the matter yet and did not know what course he would follow.

Perkins Will Run for Mayor.

Edgar A. Perkins, who is prominent in labor circles in this city, has announced that he will be a candidate for the Democratic nomination for mayor next year. Mr. Perkins is the first avowed candidate for the mayoralty.

Commission as Circuit Judge.

J. F. Elliott, of Kokomo, was in the city yesterday to get his commission as circuit judge of Tipton and Howard counties. Judge Elliott succeeds Judge W. W. Mount, of Tipton.

Fountain County Representative.

Percy Lewis, representative-elect from Fountain county, was in the city a few hours yesterday. Mr. Lewis has not taken a position on the speakership question as yet.

Dr. Sloan Recovering.

The condition of Dr. George W. Sloan, who was partially paralyzed a few weeks ago, is greatly improved. For the first time since his illness began he used his limbs and was able to sit up yesterday. It is said that the paralysis has been overcome and his friends now think he is on the road to re——

"CROWDING REFORM."

Commissioner Foulke Reviews Criticisms Made by This Paper.

To the Editor of the Indianapolis Journal:

The Journal is always so fair in its treatment of the competitive system that it seems to me I ought to correct some misapprehensions which are shown in its editorial of Nov. 13, entitled "Crowding Reform." In speaking of two "demands of its overzealous friends" you say:

"One of them, requiring cooks to undergo a civil-service examination, makes it impossible to conduct a series of government experiments to test the purity of foods. * * * The chemist of the Agriculture Department, who has the food experiments in charge, says he could go out and find a cook in two hours who would answer his purpose, but the rules require that the cook shall pass a civil-service examination, and he finds that none of the eligibles possess the knowledge that he particularly desires. There are good cooks in most of the old countries, but this is probably the first time that culinary artists have been required to pass a civil-service examination."

In point of fact, no educational tests are given at all, but applicants are graded as to the elements of experience, character, age, etc., and vouchers from former employers and others knowing the applicants' qualifications are required. From a registered list graded in this manner the commission is able to supply persons desired with very little delay. Although such lists may not always furnish the best persons, yet they will, upon an average, furnish much better persons than will be procured without them; for before these positions were classified persons who knew nothing about the occupations they were expected to follow were foisted upon the departments by those who had influence and many incompetents were appointed and sinecures established. These abuses are now prevented by the rules.

In this particular case the certification was made according to the request of the department, and no complaint has been received from any source. If there is any difficulty we can remove it very quickly if the chemist of the Agricultural Department will bring the matter to our notice through the proper channels. During several years cooks and bakers have been appointed through the registration system in Indian schools to the entire satisfaction of the Indian Office.

The second "untimely demand of the overzealous friends of reform" mentioned in your article is what you term the commission's "suggestion of a compulsory pension law for government employes." On the contrary, the commission is opposed to a pension system. In our report we say:

"There are many well-grounded objections to a permanent civil pension system. Such a system has been adopted in England and in other European countries, but considerable abuses have followed it, and the expense is very great. It is probable that if such a system were adopted it would be followed by a lobby seeking increase of pensions, and that it would become more and more onerous to the government."

You say in your article that "the commission recommends that all government employes from the date of their employment be assessed a certain sum annually to be held in trust by the government as an insurance fund for the benefit of aged and disabled employes." On the contrary, the recommendations in our report were made for the purpose of avoiding as far as possible the holding of any fund in trust by the government, or the intervention of any government agency where it could properly be avoided.

The evils of superannuation have been repeatedly called to the attention of Congress. Although there is legally no obstacle whatever to the discharge of any employe who has become superannuated or inefficient, the difficulty comes from the fact that appointing officers have not the heart to dismiss old and faithful servants simply because they have become incapacitated, and many of them are thus retained in the service at the expense of the government and to the demoralization of the service itself. It is not economy to keep these men in the service, but it has not hitherto been found practicable to dismiss them without providing some allowance for their support in old age. To remedy this, no less than twelve bills have been introduced in Congress at different times, most of them providing for an assessment upon the salaries of employes to pay for retirement annuities, the government to receive this assessment and pay the annuity; but the assessments provided for in these bills have been wholly insufficient, and if such bills should pass we would have the same experience that they had in England, where the system of providing a superannuation fund by deductions from salaries was twice tried and failed, and was at last succeeded by a civil pension list. This would be very objectionable, and the commission, therefore, thought it wise to recommend that in place of such superannuation fund to be controlled by the government, all those who enter the public service hereafter ought to be required to protect the government against the consequences of their becoming superannuated, by taking out an annuity insurance payable at a certain age or upon disability occurring prior thereto. Such a system would encourage the appointment of such clerks and employes as are physically well qualified for their work and least likely to become disabled or superannuated, and by this means the government would be relieved from taking charge of the annuities and from the importunities and lobbying which are likely to follow any system conducted directly by government agency. It was suggested, however, that the government might profitably intervene to secure the payment of premiums by deductions from salaries, and to require from the insurance companies the deposit of suitable securities. It ought to be recognized that while superannuated or disabled persons remain in the public service, the government is actually paying, in another form, something which is even more expensive than a superannuation allowance, and that it is the part of wisdom to provide some means by which this burden may be removed, with the least possible outlay to the government.

WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE.

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